



“World Needs Bad Men”? TV-Noir and the Limits of Empathy

Alberto N. García

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True Detective (HBO, 2014)



1. Genre: *Noir*, *Neo-Noir* and *TV-Noir*

- An open concept: genre, style, movement, hybrids
- Essential features
 - **Criminal plot**
 - **Moral ambiguity**
 - **Urban realism/sense of place**
 - **Socio-political critique**
 - **Antiheroism/alienation**
 - **Expressionism**
 - **Weight of the past**
 - **Existentialism/Tragedy**



1. Genre: *Noir*, *Neo-Noir* and *TV-Noir*

- An open concept: genre, style, movement, hybrids
- Essential features
- *Neo-Noir*: “self-consciousness” and “crime does pay”
- *TV-Noir* and the lack of closure



2. Emotion: character engagement

- Identification, empathy, sympathy...



Hannibal (NBC, 2013-15)



2. Emotion: character engagement

- Identification, empathy, sympathy...
- Levels of engagement (Smith):
 - Alignment
 - Allegiance



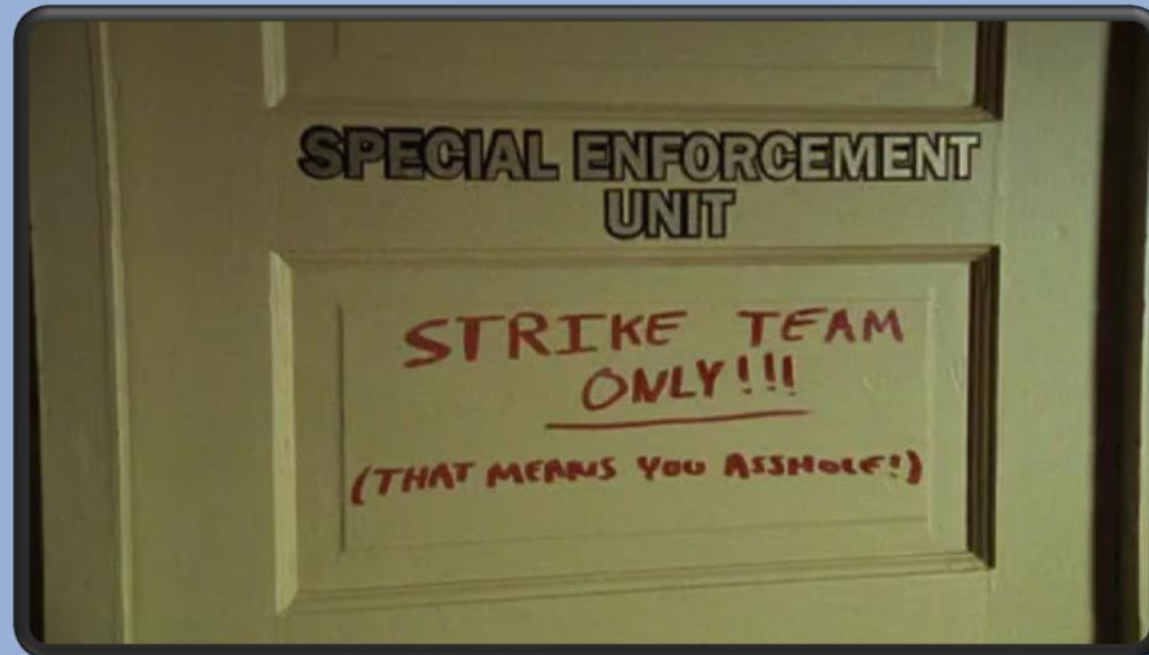
3. Engagement in TV Narrative

- Textual duration
- Broadcasting rhythm
- A more complex, changing and challenging allegiance



4. TV, *Noir* antihero and Empathy

1. Moral comparatism



The Shield (FX, 2002-08)



4. TV, *Noir* characters and Empathy

1. Moral comparatism
2. Family



***The Fall* (BBC, 2013-)**



***The Americans* (FX, 2013)**



***True Detective* (HBO, 2015)**



***Boardwalk Empire* (HBO, 2010-15)**



4. TV, *Noir* characters and Empathy

1. Moral comparatism
2. Family
3. Acts of contrition



Breaking Bad (AMC, 2008-13)



4. TV, *Noir* characters and Empathy

1. Moral comparatism
2. Family
3. Acts of contrition
4. Victimization



***Dexter* (Showtime, 2006-13)**



***The Sopranos* (HBO, 1999-2007)**



***True Detective II* (HBO, 2015)**



***Southcliffe* (Channel 4, 2013)**



5. The Limits of Empathy

- Cyclical re-allegiance



John Luther (*Luther*)



Andy Sipowicz (*NYPD Blue*)



Mike Ehrmantraut (*Better Call Saul*)



Thomas Shelby (*Peaky Blinders*)



5. The Limits of Empathy

- Cyclical re-allegiance
- Switching allegiance



Ben Sherman (*Southland*)



Lester Nygaard (*Fargo*)



Shane Vendrell (*The Shield*)



Bodie Broadus (*The Wire*)



6. The Sense of an Ending

- The emergency of “ars moriendi”
- Moral clarity
- New trend in *TV-Noir*: redemption, optimism, happy-ending.



7. The rise of “Bright *Noir*”



“You keep your chin up Gus Grimly. We're winning this thing! Don't you forget”
(Molly Solverson)



Fargo (FX, 2014-)



7. The rise of “Bright *Noir*”



“The dinner you wanted to treat me to. How about now?”.

(Saga Norén)



7. The rise of “Bright *Noir*”



“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgive one another as God in Christ forgave you”.
(Rev. Paul Coates)



7. The rise of “Bright Noir”



“You don't have to go. I just take a left up here, hop on the freeway down to Mexico. In a couple of hours, we're sitting on the beach in Baja having margaritas”.
(Hank Dolworth)



7. The rise of “Bright *Noir*”



“I said you’d be fine”.
(Raylan Givens)



7. The rise of “Bright *Noir*”



“Once, there was only dark. If you ask me, light is winning”.

(Rust Cohle)



***True Detective* (HBO, 2014)**



Alberto N. García Martínez

School of Communication
University of Navarra (Spain)
albgarcia@unav.es

Web - unav.academia.edu/AlbertoGarcía

Blog - gentedigital.es/comunidad/series/

Twitter - [@AlbertoNahum](https://twitter.com/AlbertoNahum)

